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OPINION

Editorials —

Visitor to CIA Base Says Agency in Bind

One of our far-flung correspondents, a resident of New Rochelle, N.Y., last month traveled to Arlington, Va., in response to an invitation from the Central Intelligence Agency. Among 300 members of Sigma Delta Chi, national journalistic society, he visited the agency's headquarters, the second group, he understands, to have that opportunity. His report follows.

"The headquarters is really, really plush, all marble, great big wide corridors, modern works of art on the walls, high ceilings — in all a magnificent place.

"We were ushered into a beautiful auditorium, where a panel of three officials: Herbert E. Hetu, retired naval officer, assistant to the director of Central Intelligence for Public Affairs, Paul Chretien, senior CIA briefer, and Dennis Berend, deputy assistant for public affairs, outlined what the CIA does. They emphasized that cloak and dagger stuff plays a very insignificant role in their agency's affairs. The president gets a daily briefing.

"The CIA's chief function is to supply knowledge about foreign situations. It goes through everything, environmental, scientific, engineering, demographic, political data, everything. No U.S. citizens are agents, foreigners only, paid or unpaid. Unpaid are the most reliable because they probably side with us ideologically and are less apt to be double agents.

"Subsequent to the summary from the panel, a Q. & A. session was held. The questioning, as you might expect of an audience with a bunch of journalists in it (our friend is in an allied profession) was sharp. They asked about Helms (the former director). Should he be indicted? Did he do wrong? Would panel members have done what he did? In the main these questions weren't

answered. Panelists said they would answer questions of fact only.

"Next on the agenda were tea and cookies in the Rendezvous Room at a price of \$1 per head.

"Each person was given an informational kit. In it was a full-sized, signed photograph of new director Adm. Stansfield Turner in uniform in front of an American flag."

What did our friend think of his experience with CIA officials?

"My overall impression," he told us on the telephone from his office in New York City, "is that they are in trouble up to their eyes and that this public affairs department is either brand new or recently greatly expanded."

Gazette Mocks CIA

Editor the Gazette:

Your editorial of Nov. 3 about the Central Intelligence Agency is probably factually correct and is interesting as much for what it reveals about the Gazette as for what it tells us about the CIA. The latter is revealed as quaking visibly because of its supposedly poor public image and as feverishly attempting to enhance its public acceptance with a vigorous public relations effort.

The Gazette's pleasure at finding the CIA "in trouble up to their eyes" can scarcely be contained. What an irony!

For any responsible institution or citizen to derive an iota of satisfaction from the decline in influence and prestige of the CIA is not understandable. This organization of dedicated men and women, numbers of whom have died obscure deaths in faraway lands, has been for a generation a mighty bastion against our foreign enemies.

The Gazette — and all others of that persuasion — mock it at our peril.

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